



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



JUSTICE REFORM BILL SIGNED INTO LAW



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Last week, Governor Dennis Daugaard signed Senate Bill 70, the criminal justice reform legislation, which is designed to reduce the state's prison population while treating more non-violent offenders through other means.

Daugaard says, "the legislation still keeps the most violent people in prison. But he says the less violent offenders will be treated outside of prison through intensive probation, parole and other incentive measures."

Legislative leaders and State Supreme Court Chief Justice David Gilbertson also played roles in the passage of the bill and were part of the signing. Gilbertson says "Drug and Alcohol courts already are doing some of what the legislation calls for. There will be training for court personnel regarding the new measures." One chapter of this new legislation allows the courts to inquire whether the defendant is currently serving in or is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces. If the defendant is currently in the military or is a veteran, the court may consult with the VA or other respective agencies regarding treatment options available to the defendant, including federal, state and local programs.



SDNG HOSTS 29TH ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE DINING-OUT

The South Dakota National Guard hosted the 2013 Legislative Dining-Out at the Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Pierre, Thursday, February 7. This annual tradition has brought Guardsmen and the state Legislature together for a formal evening for the last 29 years, but the tradition of the dining-out and/or dining-in dates back much further.

"The Guard is an organization that is rich in history and tradition," said Maj. Corey Norris, SDNG legislative liaison officer. "This event provides the Guard an opportunity to honor the legislators by hosting them at a traditional military event where we highlight our significant accomplishments to the community, state, and nation."

The atmosphere, while formal, includes deep-rooted traditions which lighten the mood and provide both members and guests not only plenty of laughs, but a chance to learn some of the organizations history and traditions and an opportunity to recognize individual and/or unit achievements.

The Legislature was also shown a video highlighting 2012 and the many accomplishments made by the men and women of the SDNG. In addition to the many SDNG accomplishments highlighted during the night, the Guard also recognized a family, employer and public servant with an award for their contributions to the SDNG mission.

The awards portion of the dining-out began by presenting Daktronics with the 2012 South Dakota Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (SD ESGR) Pro Patria Award. The Pro Patria Award is presented to the one employer in the state who provides the most exceptional support of our national defense through leadership practices and personnel policies that support their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. Daktronics is a manufacturer and technical contractor that provides electronic display products and custom-designed and integrated systems. Located in Brookings, Daktronics employs more than 2,500 people, including 1st Lt. Cody Becker, a production supervisor and member of Battery A, 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion in Aberdeen.

"Employers are inextricably linked to the nation's defense by sharing their most precious assets, their employees," said Capt. Lona Christensen, SD ESGR executive director, during the award presentation. "Daktronics is being recognized for their outstanding contributions to the state and nation's military services. Their leadership exemplifies the patriotic spirit that is alive and well here in our great state of South Dakota."

"Daktronics has had quite a number of employees who, as members of the South Dakota National Guard, have been called to active duty going back to the Iraq war. These people and their families make significant sacrifices in their personal lives to serve our country," said Jim Morgan, Daktronics president and CEO. "We feel it is our obligation as their employer to make sure that they know that we are fully supportive of their service to our country. They have enough other things to be concerned about without being concerned about their job."

The SDNG next awarded the 2013 Williamson Militiaman Award to Maj. Gen. Raymond Carpenter (retired), former acting director of the Army National Guard, and Maj. Gen. Steven Dooehen (retired), former adjutant general of the SDNG.

The Williamson Militiaman Award was established in 1987 by Maj. Gen. Ronald F. Williamson (retired) to recognize an individual who exemplifies the spirit of the citizen-soldier as shown by their community leadership, their support of the National Guard and the defense of our country.



DINING OUT (CONTINUED)

Maj. Gen. Carpenter commanded at all levels in the SD Army Guard; from lieutenant to colonel, commanding both the 109th Engineer Battalion and 109th Group. He also served in key, senior-leadership positions as the chief of staff and the assistant adjutant general for the Army Guard, where he was engaged in the initial years of what would be the largest mobilization of the South Dakota National Guard since World War II. Carpenter went on to serve as special assistant to the director of the Army National Guard in Washington, D.C., and was later appointed as the acting director of the Army National Guard, where he served for two-and-a-half years before retiring with more than 44 years of service.

Maj. Gen. Doohen held numerous positions throughout his career in the SD Air Guard to include commander of the 175th Tactical Fighter Group and commander of the 114th Fighter Wing. He later went on to serve as the assistant adjutant general for the Air Guard, and was later appointed as the SDNG's 20th adjutant general in 2007. As the adjutant general, he guided the preparation of 4,400 soldiers and airmen, and 950 full-time federal and state employees helping to ensure they were ready to respond in times of state or national emergency. Doohen retired with more than 40 years of service.

Past recipients of the award include: Former Adjutants General Phil Killey and Harold Sykora, former U.S. Senators Tom Daschle and Tim Johnson, and former Governors William J. Janklow and M. Michael Rounds.

To conclude the awards portion of the evening, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch awarded the 2013 Adjutant General's Family Award to Chief Master Sgt. Bruce and Faye Lee of Valley Springs. "As the adjutant general, I recognize the vital importance of our families to the success of our National Guard mission," Reisch said during the award presentation. "The goal of this award is to recognize those family members who support their service members in an exemplary manner while managing family, careers, or even hardship, all the while not seeking recognition for their sacrifices."

Chief Master Sgt. Bruce Lee is a member of the 114th Operations Group of the SD Air Guard. He and his wife, Faye, have been exceptional supporters of the Air National Guard and the Sioux Falls community. Bruce and Faye have spent countless hours volunteering their time to support local organizations such as the Banquet, the 114th Fighter Wing's Family Volunteer Group, Project Supply Our Students, the enlisted Association of South Dakota, Young Heroes Program, Junior Achievement, the Mentoring Program, American Cancer Volunteers, March of Dimes and the Sioux Empire Home Builders Association. They also teach at their local church, belong to the Knights of Columbus, and volunteer with the Neighborhood Coordinator Committee.

Following the awards ceremony and bringing the evening to a close, Gov. Dennis Daugaard addressed the soldiers and airmen in attendance. Daugaard specifically thanked Guard members for their continuous support on missions both at home and abroad.



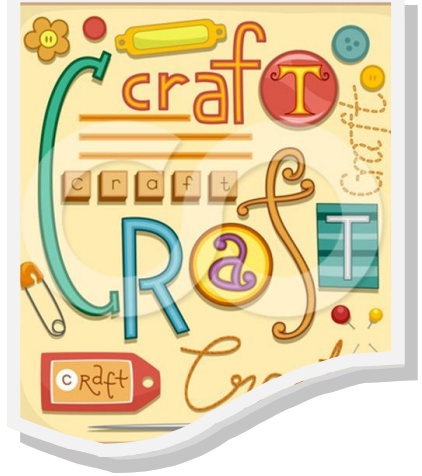
SFVAHCS VETERANS ARTS AND CRAFTS

Veterans are invited to display their artistic talents in the annual Veterans Arts & Crafts Show at the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System. The show will take place March 8, 2013, in the 4th floor auditorium from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Veterans will compete for prizes and enjoy a reception in their honor at 3:00 PM. Some entries may advance to the annual National Veterans Creative Arts competition.

To enter, veterans must receive at least a portion of their medical care from the Sioux Falls VA as an inpatient or outpatient or use one of our five Community Based Outpatient Clinics in Aberdeen, Watertown, Wagner, South Dakota and Sioux City and Spirit Lake, Iowa.

Veterans may enter woodworking, water, oil, or acrylic paintings; black and white or color photographs, needlework, woodworking projects, ceramics, stained or fused glass, or any other medium.

To enter projects in the show, please contact Shirley Redmond, Public Affairs Officer, at 605-333-6889 or shirley.redmond@va.gov.



DEPLOYMENT CEREMONY

A deployment ceremony will be held for 11 soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment at 10 a.m. Friday, February 15, at the Duke Corning Armory drill floor on Camp Rapid, Rapid City (2823 W. Main Street). The public is encouraged to attend.

The Rapid City-based 129th will deploy to Afghanistan for a nine-month tour in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The mission of the 129th is to provide public affairs support, media coverage and media escort.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Rapid City Mayor Sam Kooiker and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG, will be the featured speakers at the ceremony.

The unit will report to Fort Dix, New Jersey, to complete several weeks of theater-specific training prior to deployment overseas. This is the third mobilization for the unit since the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism; deploying to Fort Riley, Kansas, in 2003 and MacDill Air Force Base, Florida/Qatar in 2006.

FEDERAL BENEFITS SWITCH TO ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS MARCH 1

If you receive your federal benefits by paper check, you'll need to switch to electronic payments by March 1, 2013. (<http://www.godirect.org/social-security-federal-benefits-direct-deposit/>)

The federal benefits affected are:

- Social Security
- Supplemental Security Income
- Veterans Affairs
- Railroad Retirement Board
- Office of Personnel Management
- Department of Labor (Black Lung)

You have two options for receiving benefits electronically:

Direct Deposit: The U.S. Treasury deposits your benefits directly into your bank account. You can sign up for direct deposit in one of these ways:

- Enroll online.
- Visit your bank or credit union.
- Call (800) 333-1795 (Mon-Fri, 8am-8pm ET).
- Contact the local office of the agency providing your federal benefits.
- Enroll by mail.

Prepaid Debit Card: The U.S. Treasury deposits your benefits directly to a debit card. This is an option if you don't have a bank account and do not want to open one. You can request a debit card by calling (800) 333-1795 (Mon-Fri, 8 am-8 pm ET). Be ready with the information you'll need to set up your federal benefit payments by direct deposit or debit card.

Information on both of these options can be found at: <https://www.godirect.gov/gpw/index.gd>

If you have questions, call the Go Direct Helpline at (800) 333-1795.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS RECOGNIZED

This week the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce's Ambassador's presented the 2013 Community Champions Awards to people and groups for their contributions to the community.

Tom Gohn, Brown County Veterans Service Officer, was recognized for his contributions to veterans in the Aberdeen area. He was awarded the "Veterans Advocate of the Year" award.

Jon Gohn, veterans service officer for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, said he is very proud of his uncle Tom and appreciates all that he has learned from Tom. Gohn said, "He continues to inspire me and makes me want to be a better service officer."

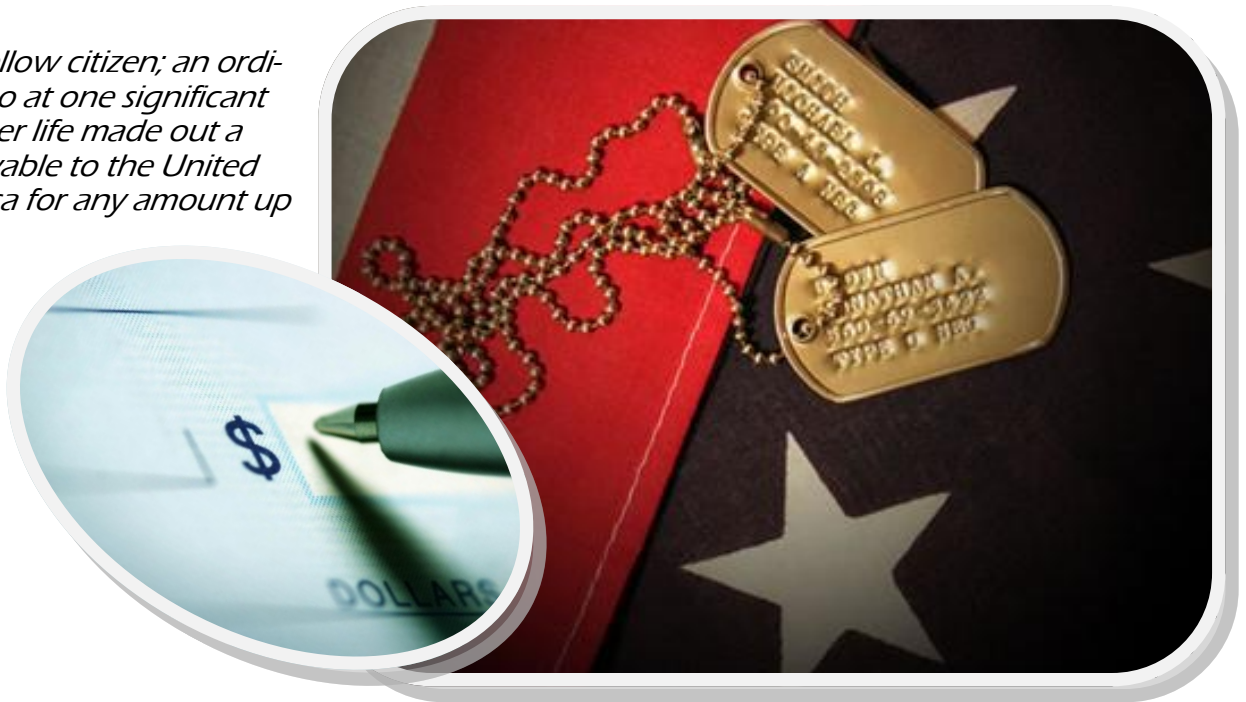
Sarah Bierman (U. S. Department of Labor) was recognized as "Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year".

Congratulations Tom and Sarah, and thanks for all you do for South Dakota's veterans.

Upcoming Events

Feb. 16—SFVAHCS Variety Show—2:00 pm
Mar. 8—SFVAHCS Veterans Arts and Crafts Show
Mar. 14—VABHHCS Veterans Creative Arts Show—Fort Meade
Apr. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
May 3-5—DAV State Convention—The Lodge—Deadwood
May 11—Yellow Ribbon for the 935th—Rapid City
May 19—Yellow Ribbon for the 927th—Sioux Falls
Jul. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Oct. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Dec. 15—Wreaths Across America Ceremony—Black Hills National Cemetery—10:00 am

A veteran is a fellow citizen; an ordinary person who at one significant point in his or her life made out a blank check payable to the United States of America for any amount up to and including life itself.



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